



The Croydon Chronicle

Winter 2015

Letter from the Supervisor

One aspect of nature that always amazes me is that it is always on the move. Animals move in search of food and shelter, the wind whips trees to and fro and the snow melts moving miniature icebergs across lawns and parking lots. And if things aren't moving then, at the very least, they are changing. Temperatures rise and fall, the days, thankfully, get a little longer, and before long new buds form telling us that winter is almost over.

This time of year I try to remind myself to enjoy winter. The birds that congregate outside my office window are a nice way to do this on a particularly cold and snowy day. Just this week I spied a Carolina wren, juncos, house finches, nuthatches and a few mourning doves enjoying our front birdfeeder in the middle of a snowstorm. Sure, they cleared out when a young Cooper's hawk came to visit but they were a welcome sight. Even the hawk was a welcome sight. How often does a hawk perch on a fence six feet from your desk? It's important to stop and notice the

small things and to appreciate the season because, in the blink of eye, everything changes.

To help you appreciate the season, we have many programs this winter. **Nature Tots** is back with weekday and weekend options to keep your little one busy and help stave off cabin fever. **Bookworms** includes three new books that will delight both adults and toddlers.

There are some new programs too! **Open Fire Meals** is your chance to learn more about campfire cooking as staff help you discover how to prepare a delicious lunch around our campfire ring. In **Survival Skills** naturalists will teach 9-14 year olds some basic outdoor skills like plant identification, primitive shelter building and campfire construction as they enjoy the afternoon outdoors at CCNC.

It is also worth mentioning that our summer camp offerings are also available online. We don't mean to rush winter out of here too quickly but now is a great time to plan for summer. In the City of

Rockville, summer camp registration begins January 20th for both residents and non-residents. You can view the entire camp guide at www.rockvillemd.gov/camps or simply visit the CCNC website to get the listing of Nature Center camps. We have added more camps for 5-7 yr olds like **Guppy Nature Camp** and **Art of Nature Camp** and added some specialty camps like **Outdoor Expeditions** and **Insect Investigations**. This year, the ever popular **NCTV-Nature Center Television camp** is back! Sign up early because that one fills fast. Register for camps now and then you can get back to enjoying winter!

As always, we hope to see you at Croydon Creek Nature Center this season.

Enjoy your winter!

Elissa Totin
Nature Center Supervisor

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD, 20851

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240-314-8770

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www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

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ccnc@rockvillemd.gov

Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

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Kids Corner

Winter Tree Silhouette

You will need:

- Paper
- Painters tape
- Popsicle stick or straight edge
- Watercolor paint

Directions

1. Go on a walk and observe the shapes of the trees without their leaves. Take a close look at a branch and see the shapes and sizes of the twigs. Where are the larger branches? Where do the thinner branches grow from?
2. Tear strips of painters tape that you will use for the branches. Rip some that are long and some short, some thin and some thick. Make sure to give the edges texture.
3. Arrange them on the paper to look like a tree with lots of branches.
4. Use a popsicle stick to make sure the tape is pressed down firmly so that paint does not get under the tape.
5. Paint all over the paper using different colors. You can even paint over the tape.
6. Allow the paint to dry before taking the tape off of the paper.
7. Carefully tear the tape off of the paper strip by strip. It works best to tear the tape at an angle as shown.



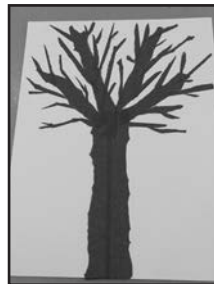
Supplies



Step 3



Step 3



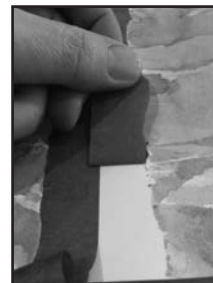
Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Step 7



Finished Product

What's Happening at the Nature Center

12TH ANNUAL

Spring Festival and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 25

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy the wonders of nature with your family.

- Woodland Hikes • Spring Native Plant Sale
- Nature Games and Crafts • Reptiles Alive Show
- Sustainability Exhibits • Bring a picnic lunch

FREE EVENT

No registration required

Party on the Wild Side!

Plan your child's next birthday party at Croydon Creek! Our nature parties are designed to educate and entertain with hands-on programs that highlight the wonders of nature. Choose from seven nature themes that vary depending on age. Whether you choose to meet our reptiles and amphibians up close or go on a geocaching adventure, Croydon Creek provides an exciting birthday experience! Call us or check our website for more information about themes and how to schedule!

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek
(240)314-8770

Download our party brochure for more info.

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek • **240-314-8770**

Feeding Winter Wildlife

By Heather Stiltner, Naturalist

Many people enjoy attracting wildlife to their yards. During the winter months, this may include supplemental feeding, or providing food for wildlife beyond their usual natural diets. Feeding wildlife in the winter is not necessary to their survival, as animals have various adaptations to the harsh conditions of the season. In fact, supplemental feeding often causes more harm than good both to animals and to humans.

One exception to this principle is feeding winter birds, which can be a beneficial and rewarding activity when done correctly.

How to Feed Winter Birds

Birds most benefit from feeding from late October through early April, when their natural food sources are most limited. Keep the feeders clean and the areas around them clear of debris and droppings. Offer various seeds to attract a greater variety of birds, or use specific seed types to attract certain species. Here are some feed options:

- **Black-oil sunflower seed** has a high oil content that is nutritionally important for birds and attracts a large variety of species.
- **Nyjer (a.k.a. thistle)** is especially attractive to finches.
- **Peanuts** attract blue jays, chickadees, woodpeckers, and squirrels.
- **White proso millet** attracts many species, including sparrows, juncos, and doves.
- **Suet** is a high-quality animal fat that is highly sought-after by woodpeckers, chickadees, cardinals, and nuthatches.
- **Safflower seed** attracts several species of birds and is less appealing to squirrels.
- **Water** may be difficult for birds to come by in winter, so consider providing a birdbath near a tree with

overhanging branches where birds can preen after bathing.

Different bird species also prefer different styles of feeders. Use a variety of feeder types to increase the diversity of visitors. The most common types of feeders are hoppers, platform and tube feeders. There are also many options for homemade feeder projects.

As spring approaches, feeders can be put away to encourage the birds to forage for themselves. Keep feeders in a cool, dry place to prevent mold.

What about Squirrels?

Some people enjoy attracting squirrels, although others consider them pests. There are many recommendations and products for keeping squirrels out of birdfeeders, but squirrels are intelligent, agile, and determined animals. More often than not, they will find a way into the feeders anyway. One alternative is to place peanuts or cracked corn on the ground at a separate location, providing the squirrels a meal while (hopefully) distracting them away from the feeders.

Do Not Feed the Deer

Aside from birds (and the inevitable squirrels), it is not recommended to provide supplemental food for any other wildlife, including white-tailed deer. Despite good intentions, this practice often harms rather than helps the animals.

Deer do not need food from humans to survive the winter because they have natural adaptations for this harsh season. They develop fat layers and heavier winter coats. To conserve energy, their metabolism slows down and they become less active. The deer reduce their overall food consumption and gradually switch their diets largely to woody plant parts, and their digestive systems adapt simultaneously to these changes. When suddenly presented with an abundant new food source, as humans may provide, their stomachs cannot digest it properly and

can actually sicken the deer. Luring deer to supplemental feeding areas can also foster the spread of disease among the animals and bring them into potentially harmful contact with humans.

“Human” food, such as bread, should never be given to any wildlife, as it does not provide them with proper nutrition and can be detrimental to their health.

Attracting Wildlife Year-Round

The best way to help wild animals survive a severe winter is to provide them with native plants year-round. If animals go into the winter in good condition, they are better able to survive. Plant trees, shrubs, and flowers to provide nesting sites, shelter, and food sources. Also, leave seeds and pods that drop in the garden for wildlife to eat. These practices are not considered supplemental feeding and can greatly benefit local wildlife.

For More Information:

Feeding birds and common feeder species:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/wafeeding.asp>

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/pdfs/CommonFeederBirds.pdf>

White-tailed deer:

http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Hunt_Traps/deer/wtdeerfacts.asp

Attracting and coexisting with wildlife:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/wauninvited.asp>

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/index.asp>

Nature Center Camps 2015

Camp Registration is Open

Camp season is June 15-August 21

View Camp Guide on line at: www.rockville.gov/camps



- Art of Nature
- Guppy Nature Camp
- Insect Investigation
- Nature Explorations
- Nature Service Learning Camp
- NCTV - Nature Center Television
- Outdoor Expeditions

Pick up your copy at any of the City facilities:

City Hall • Croydon Creek Nature Ctr., • Thomas Farm Com. Ctr.
Rockville Swim and Fitness Ctr. • Twinbrook Com. Rec. Ctr. • Lincoln Park Com. Ctr.

Also available at:

Rockville Library • Twinbrook Library
or view on line at: www.rockvillemd.gov/camps

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek • **240-314-8770**

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Road

Rockville, MD 20851

240-314-8770

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

The Croydon Chronicle

Winter Programs

Bookworms (Adult/Child)

Curl up with a good book at the Nature Center. At each Bookworm program, we'll read a new story and you'll get a copy of the book to take home. Each program may include a craft or hike. Adult participation required. Age: 2-5

Who Will See Their Shadows This Year?

49925 Su 1/25 3:30-4:15 PM \$10/\$12

Bear Snores On

49926 Su 2/22 3:30-4:15 PM \$10/\$12

Extraordinary Egg

49927 Su 3/15 3:30-4:15 PM \$10/\$12

Croydon Creek Campfire (Adult/Child)

Gather around the campfire with your friends for stories, snacks and more. An adult must accompany children and all participants must register. All Ages

Spring Night Hike

Enjoy a night time hike into the forest to look and listen for signs of spring. After the hike, we'll gather around the campfire to enjoy a campfire treat.

49917 Sa 3/21 7:30-8:30 PM \$5/\$6

49918 Sa 3/21 8-9 PM \$5/\$6

Family Ramble

Join a Naturalist on a hike through the Hayes Forest Preserve. Trails are not stroller friendly. All participants must register including adults. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Age: 1+

Winter Adaptations

Explore the winter adaptations of plants and animals while on a brisk walk in Civic Center Park.

49928 Su 2/15 1:30-2:30 PM \$4/\$6

Nature Knit Along

Learn to knit or crochet a cozy nest that wildlife rehabilitation staff can use when taking care of their young patients. We'll provide the pattern and the yarn or bring some of your own (stash buster). You provide the needles or crochet hook. A link to the pattern is on our website. Finished nests will be taken to local wildlife rehabilitators. Age: 8+

49986 Su 2/8 1:30-3:30 PM Free

Nature Tots (Adult/Child)

Spend time with your child discovering the wonders of nature. A Naturalist will help you explore a new nature topic through nature play, crafts, stories and hikes. Dress for the weather. This program is intended to provide special one-on-one time for you and your child. Adult participation required. Spaces are limited.

Age: 2-5

Groundhog Day

49911 Th 1/29 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Winter Birds

49912 Th 2/19 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Nature Detectives

49913 Sa 2/28 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Fur and Feathers

49914 Sa 3/14 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Amphibians

49915 Th 3/19 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Open Fire Meals

There's more to campfire cooking than hotdogs and s'mores. Learn how to make an entire meal over the campfire and enjoy a delicious lunch. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. All participants must register. All Ages

49931 Sa 3/7 11 AM-1 PM \$12/\$14

To register visit <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/guide/>

Croydon Creek Nature Center • 852 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD, 20851

Phone

240-314-8770

Web address

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

E-mail

ccnc@rockvillemd.gov



City of
Rockville
Get Into It

Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

Owl-n-tine's Day

Love is in the air for owls! While other birds are away on migration, owls stay near home for their winter mating season. Come learn about these wonderful birds, hear a story, dissect an owl pellet and take a peek at our resident owl.

Age: 6+

49987 Sa 2/14 10-10:45 AM \$7/\$9

Saturday Story and Craft (Adult/Child)

Stop by the Nature Center on Saturday mornings for storytime and a craft. A Naturalist will read a story and then lead a craft activity based on the theme of the story. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Age: 2-5

49922 Sa 1/17 10-10:45 AM \$4/\$6

49923 Sa 2/21 10-10:45 AM \$4/\$6

Saturday Story and Hike

49919 Sa 3/28 10-11 AM \$4/\$6

Survival Skills

Spend the afternoon learning basic outdoor skills such as identifying plant and wildlife species in Maryland, orienteering, campfire construction and primitive shelter building. Round out the day by making a survival bracelet to take home.

Age: 9-14

49988 F 3/27 1-4 PM \$15/\$18

SCOUT BADGE DAYS

JUNIOR GIRL SCOUTS - ANIMAL HABITATS

Sunday, Feb. 1, 2-4 p.m.

WEBELOS - GEOLOGIST BADGE

Sunday, March 1, 2-4 p.m.

Naturalists will help you complete the necessary requirements to achieve the badges. All materials provided; badges are not supplied by the Nature Center. Programs held rain or shine. Dress for the weather.

Cost: \$14 residents; \$16 non-residents
For additional information or to register call
Melinda Norton at 240-314-8771.

Summer Camps

Guppy Nature Camp

What's creeping, crawling and flapping your way? Guppy Nature Camp! Meet the critters that call Croydon Creek home and explore exciting natural history topics. Hands-on activities, experiments, hikes and crafts are all in a day's fun. Age: 5-7

9 AM-12 PM

50255 7/6-7/10 \$102/\$122

50258 8/10-8/14 \$102/\$122

9 AM-3 PM

50254 6/22-6/26 \$203/\$240

50256 7/27-7/31 \$203/\$240

50257 8/3-8/7 \$203/\$240

Art of Nature

Hikes and nature play are the inspiration for making works of art that utilize a variety of artistic techniques, mixed media and eco-friendly supplies. Campers will observe, explore and collaborate to get their creativity flowing to make masterpieces inspired by nature. Age: 5-7

9 AM-3 PM

50269 7/20-7/24 \$215/\$245

Nature Explorations

Whether on land or in water, enjoy discovering nature. Topics may include geology, stream ecology, zoology and botany. Explore a variety of habitats through hands-on and minds-on activities, field studies and other experiments. Camp may include an off-site field trip. Age: 8-10

9 AM-3 PM

50259 6/22-6/26 \$225/\$255

50260 7/27-7/31 \$225/\$255

Insect Investigations

Buzz right into the world of entomology and uncover the fascinating realm of insects. Conduct field investigations, construct a bug sucker and create a field kit to continue your investigations in your own backyard.

Age: 8-11

9 AM-3 PM

50270 7/20-7/24 \$235/\$260

Nature Service Learning Camp

Have fun at Croydon Creek while earning Student Service Learning (SSL) hours. Participants will investigate local environmental issues each morning. In the afternoon they will complete an eco-friendly volunteer project. Each person will receive 10 SSL hours total.

Age: 10-14

9 AM-3 PM

Soil Conservation

50261 7/13-7/15 \$120/\$140

Water Conservation

50262 8/3-8/5 \$120/\$140

NCTV - Nature Center Television

Do you love watching nature shows on the National Geographic Channel or Animal Planet? Learn the process of making nature programs by filming your own. One day will be spent behind the scenes at the National Geographic Society in D.C. The rest of the week will be spent researching your own script and shooting your film. Age: 10-14

9 AM-3 PM

50266 6/15-6/19 \$250/\$290

Outdoor Expeditions

Get outdoors and discover local natural wonders with staff from Croydon Creek. Experience daily field trips where participants will explore the best nature spots in the area. All trips will be outside so dress for the weather and bring a lunch. Detailed information will be emailed three weeks prior to the start of camp. Age: 9-12

9 AM-3 PM

50263 8/10-8/14 \$265/\$310